

# Best Management Practices for Dental Office Waste

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the Washington State Dental Association (WSDA) are collaborating to help dental offices properly control dental office wastewater by implementing updated Best Management Practices by 2005. Ecology and WSDA believe that the most effective approach is a cooperative voluntary compliance program between dentists and state and local governments. If successful, the need for more costly regulation of dental offices can be avoided.

## DO...

- ✓ Do install ISO 11143 approved amalgam separators in your office before August 2005
- ✓ Do use precapsulated alloys
- ✓ Do recycle used disposable amalgam capsules
- ✓ Do salvage, store and recycle non-contact amalgam (scrap amalgam)
- ✓ Do salvage (contact) amalgam pieces from restorations after removal and recycle the amalgam waste
- ✓ Do use chair-side traps to retain amalgam and recycle the content
- ✓ Do recycle contents retained by the vacuum pump filter or other amalgam collection device, if they contain amalgam
- ✓ Do appropriately disinfect extracted teeth that contain amalgam restorations and recycle along with the chair-side trap waste  
(NOTE: Confirm with your recycler that they will accept extracted teeth with amalgam restorations)
- ✓ Do properly manage and dispose of all other dangerous waste streams generated by the dental office (e.g., x-ray wastes, or lead foils and aprons).
- ✓ Do maintain all disposal records on-site for three years

## DON'T...

- ✗ Don't use bulk mercury
- ✗ Don't put the following in biohazard containers, infectious waste containers (red bags) or regular garbage:
  - used disposable amalgam capsules
  - non-contact amalgam waste
  - contact amalgam waste
  - extracted teeth that contain amalgam
- ✗ Don't rinse chair-side traps containing amalgam over drains or sinks
- ✗ Don't rinse vacuum pump filters containing amalgam or other amalgam collection devices over drains or sinks
- ✗ Don't flush amalgam waste down the drain or toilet

## Amalgam Separators

Information on evaluation and purchasing amalgam separators is available on-line at [www.dur.metrokc.gov/wlr/indwaste/dentists.htm](http://www.dur.metrokc.gov/wlr/indwaste/dentists.htm) or by contacting WSDA at [www.wsda.org](http://www.wsda.org) or (206) 448-1914. (NOTE: This recommendation does not apply to practices which are restricted exclusively to these dental specialties: orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, oral medicine and pathology, oral and maxillofacial radiology, periodontics, and endodontics and prosthodontics, provided amalgam fillings are neither placed nor removed in these practices or are only placed or removed on less than 10 practice days during the year.)

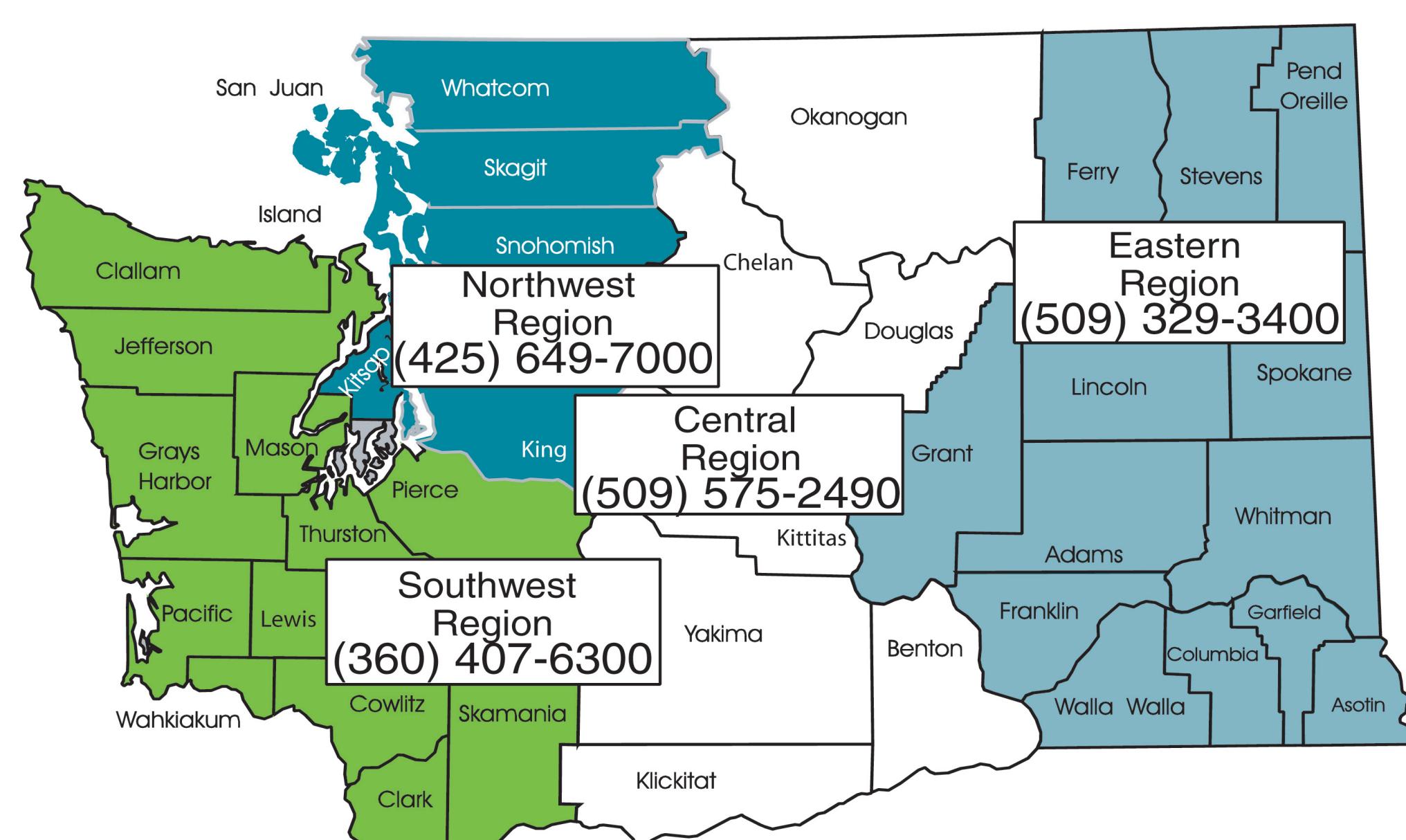
## More Information, including

- Amalgam Separator Vendors
- Amalgam Waste Service Providers
- Frequently Asked Questions

can be found at [www.ecy.wa.gov/dentalbmps](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/dentalbmps) or at [www.wsda.org](http://www.wsda.org). If you have questions, contact the WSDA at (206) 448-1914 or call your nearest Ecology regional office:

## Department of Ecology Regions

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr>



## X-rays

### What should I do with used fixer?

It is illegal to put used fixer down the drain, into a septic system or into the garbage.

- Collect it in a container marked "Used fixer only." Keep fixer separate from your developer.
- Have a dangerous waste management service pick it up for recycling or dangerous waste disposal. See vendor web site at [www.ecy.wa.gov/dentalbmps](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/dentalbmps)
- Buy a recovery system to reclaim the silver yourself. To be effective and meet silver discharge limits, such systems need to have two canisters placed in a series as well as regular canister replacement, maintenance and testing. See vendor web site at [www.ecy.wa.gov/dentalbmps](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/dentalbmps), for more information on installation and required maintenance.

### What should I do with used developer?

Used developer is non-hazardous and safe to be disposed to sewer. Keep developer and used fixer separated.

### How should I handle used x-ray film?

Used x-ray film contains silver and is dangerous waste. Collect it for recycling or proper disposal.

### What should I do with lead foil?

Lead should not be put in the garbage or in the red bio-hazard bag or sharps container. Collect lead foil for recycling.

### What do I do with worn-out lead aprons?

When aprons are no longer usable, they must be disposed of as dangerous waste due to their lead content. Keep them out of the landfill and the red bio-hazard bag.